



State of Washington

## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207

Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

### DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

**Name of Proposal:** DNS 14-039: OAK CREEK WILDLIFE AREA ROAD MANAGEMENT

#### Description of Proposal:

This project addresses roads and trails that are currently open to motor vehicles and in areas outside of the Green Dot Travel Management System. The objectives of this project are to:

1. Implement a road management plan for the Oak Creek and Rock Creek Units of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area in areas that are not part of the Green Dot Travel Management System.
2. Improve aquatic and terrestrial systems by abandoning roads and trails that are causing significant resource and environmental damage, primarily in areas with unstable geology.
3. Restore habitat in areas highly degraded by off road vehicle use.
4. Maintain and improve official US Forest Service motorized trails.
5. Seasonally close a road to motor vehicles in an area heavily used by elk (Sept 15-Nov 15).
6. Create additional disabled hunter opportunities on the wildlife area by closing the 1302511 road and adding it to the Disabled Hunter Access Program.

To meet the above objectives this project will maintain approximately 55 miles of forest roads and 7 miles of motorized trails on the Rock Creek Unit and 23 miles of forest roads on the Oak Creek Unit open to the public for motor vehicle travel. Roads in both units that are currently gated or bermed will remain closed to motor vehicles.

Most work is abandonment of existing roads which will require the removal of fill. Some dirt or gravel fill may need to be used in the construction of the motorized trail in Rock Creek Unit section 5, quantities are unknown at this time. Barrier rock may need to be added to restrict vehicle access in some areas. Grading work on abandoned roads will be to contour old roads to a natural slope or to reduce soil compaction through ripping. The construction of the new trail segment in section 5 will require grading to create and modify the road prism.

On the Rock Creek Unit the project will abandon about 14 miles of forest roads, numerous miles of illegal ORV trails plus the abandonment and restoration of about .75 miles of motorized trail (Sections 5 and 11). In addition, about 1 mile of forest road will be converted to a motorized trail and about 200 yards of new trail will be constructed (Section 5), this will be replacement trail for the portion that is being abandoned in Section 5, and will maintain access to dispersed campsites at Milk Lake.

On the Oak Creek Unit about 5 miles of road will be closed to motor vehicles. This will be through abandonment of .2 miles of forest road (Section 15), the abandonment of .5 miles of overgrown forest road (Section 5), the seasonal closure (Sept 15-Nov 15) of .9 miles of forest road (Section 5) and permanent closure of 3.4 miles of forest road (Sections 23 and 27), this closed road will be added to the disabled hunter access program and will remain open for administrative use. The roads proposed for abandonment are forest roads and have been identified in the Oak Creek Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) for abandonment. The roads are proposed for abandonment because they are no longer needed for

land management, can no longer be maintained due to unstable geology and past/continuing slope failures, no longer have vehicular access due washouts on adjacent federal land, are short spur roads to log landings, or have resource damage issues. There are also numerous illegal ORV trails being used in the area that will be abandoned due to resource damage. All road and trail abandonment will be to Forest Practice standards at a minimum. Roads with vehicle closures will have gates and signs installed to restrict vehicle access.

All roads and trails are shown on the attached maps by section and are labeled by color for the proposed action.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
Contact: Ross Huffman  
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Naches, WA 98937  
(509) 653-2390  
[Ross.Huffman@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Ross.Huffman@dfw.wa.gov)

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** Oak Creek Wildlife Area, near Yakima, Washington at two locations:

- Oak Creek Unit, Kittitas County: Township 14N, Range 15E, Sections 5, 15, 23, and 27.
- Rock Creek Unit, Yakima County: Township 17N, Range 15E, Sections 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33, and 35.

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law<sup>1</sup> does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.<sup>2</sup> We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on June 18, 2014.**

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Lisa Wood

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** June 3, 2014

**SIGNATURE:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Wood".

Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 14-039.dns